11:Faron E-5 (1952-1954)1961 SG4 Araucanians SG4
Mapuche

A good part of the land now in the confines of Alonqueo was wooded with oak trees (*robles*) about sixty years ago, and the area farmed was considerably smaller than it has been for the past generation. Now trees are scarce and the smaller second growth is continually being used for firewood. The nearby hills are largely denuded of first growth. Most of the timber was cleared commercially to meet construction needs, much going into the building of Temuco, which was founded in 1881. Trees continued to be cut by *fundo* owners and *parceleros* for sale and for building their homesteads, and even the more enterprising Mapuche hauled timber to town for sale. The Mapuche still exploit the remaining heavy growth for the manufacture of charcoal and cut the small trees for firewood, which they sell to Chileans in the rural and urban areas. Timber, however, is no longer a local resource.

Up until 1948 large parts of the region were covered by a thick growth of *colihue* or bamboo (*Chusquea cummingii*), the slender canes of which were used in house and fence construction, as well as for firewood. A blight killed off most of the *colihue* in Cautín Province. The dead stands were rapidly used up as firewood, and land was thereby cleared for agriculture.

The denuded fields in the immediate area of Temuco contrast sharply with the woodlands described in the first decade of this century (cf. Bullock, 1911). Today, slash-and-burn clearing is sporadic and infrequent, occurring mostly on the substandard land — the hillsides or marshy wooded sections along streams and rivers.

In the Roble Huacho region and similar areas of the Central Valley, little land remains uncultivated. Animals are pastured on their owner's fallow fields or, by agreement, on those of neighbors. Along the coast, where there is a good deal of uncleared, swampy, or otherwise unsuitable land for agriculture, large sections of reservations are not farmed. Here communal grazing areas and woodlands are found. The general region around the town of Toltén, for example, is quite similar in appearance to Bullock's earlier description of the Temuco region 70 or 80 kilometers to the north.

Alonqueo, like most other reservations in the Roble Huacho region, is relatively flat and therefore easily worked and harvested. Soil erosion, down to the subsoil in many places, is a serious problem which, however, is not too well recognized as such by the majority of the residents. The Mapuche are like the Chilean peasants in their lack of understanding and ability to cope with the situation. There is a general feeling that modern machinery, better-quality seed, and

11:Faron E-5 (1952-1954)1961 SG4 Araucanians SG4
Mapuche

The *título de merced* indicates the location of the households at the time of *radicación* (not available for Alonqueo), and the former settlement pattern can be compared to the present-day situation. Originally, there were eight households situated near the Toltén River along what is now the neighborhood ox road (see Map III). Only a single house was situated a fair distance from the river and apart from the other houses – that of the original chief. All houses were built on *altura* land, and only *altura* was farmed, the rest used for pasture.

The reservation formerly was much more heavily wooded. Religious ceremonies were held in the "deep woods" within reservation limits. Land was gradually cleared both to meet the needs of an expanding agriculture, and to provide wood for house lumber, fences, the manufacture of charcoal, and firewood for home use and sale in the town of Toltén. Even today, slash-and-burn methods are frequently used to clear land for farming. In 1953 land was being cleared in this manner on several reservations in the Pelehue region. Some of this was incidental to the manufacture of charcoal, but a large part represented agricultural expansion and the establishment of new households.

At present there are 16 households on the reservation, double the original number. Population has increased from 54 individuals to 82, not including the 19 adult absentees from the resident families. The average individual holdings of 5.5 hectares computed at the time of *radicación* (very little of which was in crops, as has been mentioned) now stand at an average of 2.2 hectares of crop land (or a little more than 3.5 hectares of the total land) per individual – less than the Alonqueo average. The residents are not hopeful that large-scale clearing or reclaiming of uncultivated land can be accomplished without mechanized equipment.

Land is much more evenly distributed on Llancaman, although there is some disparity. New land can be opened and is being cleared on a small scale. The prospects of Indian farming seem not bright enough, however, to hold down absenteeism. If the population increases and the community endures as a reservation, it is likely that all land that can be reclaimed from the woods and swamps will eventually be put under production. One way this could happen is through government assistance, especially in the removal of large tree stumps and the installation of drainage canals. Arrangements cannot be made with *hacendados* in the region to undertake this work. One reason for this is that the Mapuche are unable to pay rental on the machinery

[i.e. Llancaman-- Analyst]

11:Faron E-5 (1952-1954)1961 SG4 Araucanians SG4
Mapuche

and hire skilled labor to operate it. Another reason is that, by and large, the local Chilean farmers would prefer to see the Mapuche lose rather than improve their land.

The notion of private ownership of land seems less strongly developed on Llancaman and some of the other reservations in the Pelehue region than in Roble Huacho. Pelehue Indians had some difficulty estimating the amount of land they farmed, although they knew how much had been "apportioned" to each of the original *radicados* at the time the reservation was established. They spoke of "having" so-and-so many hectares and "occupying" so-and-so many additional hectares. The latter they had cleared and put under cultivation, but they did not speak of it as their private property in the way the people of the Roble Huacho region did. Inhabitants of Alonqueo, for example, not only are able to state just how many hectares they "own" themselves, but are also able to give the exact amount in the hands of the other residents.

The existence of common land permits individuals to accumulate as many animals as they are able, since there is adequate grazing land by Mapuche standards. Half-sharing in animals (see pp. 58–62 for a clarification of the half-share system) is common in the Pelehue region. There is a shortage of good-quality pasture, but there are no restrictions on using what is available. There is little or no concern with overgrazing, since many low pastures remain green throughout the year. According to Mapuche estimates, a cow or ox needs about five hectares of grazing land, a horse somewhat more than this, and a sheep less.

Reservation Huilcan: Pelehue Region

Huilcan is separated from Llancaman by a Chilean *parcela* owned and operated by a family of white farmers. The land of both Llancaman and Huilcan is approximately of the same quality, being divided among *vega* (swamp), *baja* (lowland), and *altura* (high and relatively dry land). Huilcan has a total of 200 hectares, of which only 73 are under cultivation. More than one-third of the reservation is uncleared land or *vega*, some of which could be cleared, drained, and otherwise improved to support both farming and grazing. Part of the woodland is being exploited by local residents for the manufacture of charcoal, with the approval of the chief.

As on Llancaman and the general region around Toltén, there is greater emphasis on rotation of crops than fields, as compared with

11:Faron E-5 (1952-1954)1961 SG4 Araucanians SG4
Mapuche

241 In the Liumalla region yields are somewhat higher than in the
311 Central Valley reservations and many along the Pacific coast. A return
[493] of 5:1 is considered poor, 10:1 good, and 15:1 exceptional. Yields seem to range between 6 and 9:1 over a five-year period. While drainage is poor in the bottom lands, where water is held long after the rainy season, the hillsides and sloping fields, where wheat and oats
[134] are grown, suffer from extreme erosion owing to runoff of the heavy
[132] winter rains. Gullies form in the planted fields and a significant amount of the seed is washed away. There are many bare spots, consequently, when the fields are ready for harvesting. Contour plowing
[242] could do much to prevent this, but the equipment is unavailable to the Mapuche. Actually, terraces would have to be built in many places, if the hillsides continued to be planted in crops.

311 All the land in the Liumalla region was once heavily wooded.
313 There were great stands of timber not over a generation ago. The area was cleared during a lumber boom which occurred about twenty years ago, and which contributed to the prosperity of many Mapuche families in the general region between lakes Villarrica and Calafquén. Now there are innumerable dead, stripped trunks and stumps which are hazardous for cattle and vastly impede plowing and harvesting operations. These trunks and stumps are made into charcoal by a
[314] number of the Mapuche – an industry which is a welcome supplement to agriculture in the wooded areas of Araucanía.

243 Farming in this region is difficult because harvesters and plowing machines often cannot be used on the rough terrain. A good deal of the harvest is brought in by hand, although it may be machine-threshed provided the roads are passable and the people are able to
132 cart their crops to a central threshing "depot" in town or on a nearby *fundo*. Winter is generally severe in the area, with snow falling during
[731] the coldest months. In 1953, one of the most severe winters in many years, at least 20 per cent of the animals on Nahuelpan succumbed to exposure and starvation.

423 A similarly difficult year in 1948 precipitated the people's request
425 for *división*. The reservation had been without an effective chief for
[731] several years, and troubled times resulted in numerous quarrels over
622 matters that might have been resolved by the action of a strong chief.
[518] There were boundary disputes and fights over the condition of fences and the damage to crops caused by other people's cattle. Trespassing
[731] animals were killed for food during the severe winter that followed the poor harvest. Some household heads wanted no more of reserva-

1 [i.e. Reservation M. Nahuelpan – ANALYST]

11:Faron E-5 (1952-1954)1961 SG4 Araucanians SG4
Mapuche

In brief, the system works so that a person with land and without the means or inclination to farm it makes an arrangement with another individual to share the harvest in return for supplying seeds, equipment, and most or all of the labor. Very often widows without grown sons arrange to have their fields worked in this manner, sometimes also providing the seed, for which they receive a larger share of the harvest. There is nothing inherent in the system itself which brings Chileans and Mapuche into economic relationship, but nevertheless the tendency is for most dealings between them to be in the context of the *mediero* system. This is because the Chileans are generally desirous of more land to farm and on which to pasture their animals. Conversely, the Mapuche tend to be less well equipped to cultivate all the land they hold and, where pasture is abundant, are ready to take care of the Chilean's herds as well.

As the system extends to Chileans, the owner pastures his animals on reservation land, paying the Mapuche who cares for his herd with one-half of the increase over a specified period of time. The same system also covers ventures such as charcoal manufacturing and other extractive industries, but its most important implications for the future are with regard to the Mapuche agrarian economy.

Half-share arrangements are sometimes perpetuated over many years. Such practices give the Chilean farmer a foothold in the community, but not on the same basis as rental or tenancy do. He is, however, often able to extend his operations in a number of sectors of the general region, entering into half-share arrangements on several reservations. Many Mapuche regard the system with satisfaction and feel that it is one avenue to economic salvation — a means of building up their herds and cropping their fields. But the system crosscuts traditional economic alignments within the reservation community, substituting what purports to be rational economic choice for that based on bonds of kinship and traditional labor organization. While this aspect of the *mediero* system is sometimes resented by those Mapuche who engage in it with outsiders, they rationalize their behavior in terms of economic necessity. Involvement with white Chileans is a response to scarce resources which seems to be the road most hard-pressed Mapuche are presently taking.

The following examples indicate the system in operation on several reservations.

Reservation Alonqueo: Roble Huacho Region. It will be remembered that this reservation contains a total of 513 hectares, almost all